LABOUR MONTHLY

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Trades Union Congress

INTO BATTLE

The Editor

★

TRADE UNIONS: OUR DECLARATION OF INTENT

L. G. Guy

RUTH FIRST

South-West Africa

★

Palace Government in Greece — Diana Pym

SEPTEMBER 1966

Two Shillings

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

INTO BATTLE

We have been trying to deal with it [the economic problem] by a series of temporary expedients, which have led to a series of crises as each expedient became exhausted.

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, Chancellor of the Exchequer, September 19, 1949.

For twelve years we have been attempting to do more than our resources could manage . . . Over twelve years we have slithered from one crisis to another . . . It is the road to ruin.

PETER THORNEYCROFT, speech of resignation as Chancellor of the Exchequer, January 23, 1958.

The rate of growth we intended to get, on the basis of which we predicted all our other things, is no longer available.

GEORGE BROWN, after withdrawing resignation as Minister for Economic Affairs, July 27, 1966.

August 15, 1966

The battle is joined. Through all these years since the war the bankruptcy of the policy of Britain's rulers has been demonstrated. It has been demonstrated equally through Tory Governments and through nominal Labour Governments operating Tory policy. It has been demonstrated through a ceaseless succession of chronic crises, giving rise to ever renewed desperate measures to solve them, and invariably followed by renewed economic deterioration and clamours of desperation—until anyone below the age of thirty has become habituated to living in this climate as the supposed normal condition of existence in this country, alongside the no less ceaseless paeans of praise of the miracles and blessings of the marvellous 'new capitalism'. Now a climax has been reached. The heaviest economic offensive in the modern history of the labour movement has been let loose—against wages, conditions, standards, employment, unions and union rights. Ironically this offensive has been let loose in the name of a Labour Government, but visibly under the orders of foreign banking interests allied with the City. The voice may be the voice of Wilson, Callaghan and Brown; but the hands are the hands of Wall Street and Threadneedle Street. The challenge to the whole working-class movement is open.

Rising Battle

On all sides opposition is manifest. The stand of a host of unions, including the Transport Workers and Miners; the solidarity demon-

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strated in the seamen's strike in the face of McCarthyite smears; the resignation of Frank Cousins from the Cabinet and the public opposition stand of prominent Left Labour MPs in defiance of every threat of discipline; the simultaneous strength of popular opposition expressed over Vietnam and Rhodesia alongside the wage freeze, thereby revealing the growth of understanding of the interlocked unity of domestic and international issues in the present situation: all these are portents of the battle that is developing. This battle will dominate the coming critical sessions of the Blackpool Trades Union Congress in September and the Brighton Labour Party Conference in October. It will extend in the field of industry as the Government seeks to repudiate agreed commitments to six million workers and block the just demands of millions of others. Already the first salvoes of the battle in industry have sounded with the practical challenges by ASSET and NALGO. The action of the working class, if united and mobilised in time, can defeat this economic wage-freeze offensive, which the Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, George Woodcock, has himself declared to be 'unworkable'. And by defeating the economic offensive it can open the way to compelling the change from the bankrupt policies which have led to this disastrous outcome. Parliamentary procedure may have been utilised to block consideration of the positive alternative programme for dealing with the crisis presented by the resolution of 59 Left Labour MPs on July 13. But Erskine May cannot be so easily invoked to block the inexorable necessity of such an alternative programme in the real situation in Britain. This hour of maximum danger is also the hour of maximum opportunity for the left.

No Parallel

There is no parallel for the scale of this offensive. 'Wage Freeze' is a misleading euphemism. The ban on all wage increases for six months to the end of 1966 and the call for a zero rate of increase for the next six months to the summer of 1967 is accompanied by sweeping Government measures of increased taxation of goods to raise prices, with the specific proviso that all price increases through government taxation, as well as through a variety of other loopholes, shall be exempt from the imaginary 'standstill' on prices. Thus the so-called 'wage freeze' is in reality a general wage cut—with legislative powers to enforce it. Premier Baldwin in 1925 declared that all wages must come down. The outcome was the general strike. But even Baldwin never dreamed of attempting statutory enforcement.

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Premier MacDonald in 1931, after his Cabinet had received the instructions of the New York bankers, called for an all-round 10 per cent cut. But he had to join the Tories to carry it out against official Labour opposition. This betrayal by the Labour Party's government leadership cost fourteen years before a Labour Government was returned again. Premier Attlee and Cripps sought to impose a wage freeze in 1948—eventually defeated by the Trades Union Congress. This cold-war wage-freeze policy led to the fall of the Labour Government, and cost thirteen years before a Labour Government was returned again. But even Attlee and Cripps never attempted statutory enforcement. This new height has been left for Premier Wilson, Callaghan and Brown.

How the General Council Signed a Blank Cheque

No wonder the shrewd Secretary of the TUC has hastened to make known publicly his opposition, while even the reluctant less than three-fifths majority on the General Council only registered a grudging 'acquiescence', alongside eight pages of reservations, by 20 to 12 with 2 abstentions—an 'acquiescence' which it will be the business of Blackpool to reverse. A characteristic manoeuvre from the Government's side may be noted. This below three-fifths majority on the General Council was reached on July 27, after discussions with Ministers, when many crucial points were still unclear, including the details of the proposals for statutory enforcement, or the fate of existing commitments like Wilson's solemn pledge to the railwaymen for their increase in September. But immediately after the vote the White Paper was published on July 29, laying down the lines for statutory enforcement and for the cancellation of existing contracts and commitments, and the text of the Act's notorious Part IV was only elaborated later. Thus the General Council's partial endorsement was taken on a bill whose text did not yet exist. A blank cheque was endorsed. Consequently the basis is all the stronger for the Blackpool TUC to reverse this endorsement.

A Formidable Package Deal

But this statutory imposition of a universal wage cut, described as a wage freeze, is only one prong of the total ferocious offensive proclaimed on July 20 in the confused assembly of measures of a panic emergency programme, often directly repudiating previous pledges and forecasts from only a short time previously, and obviously put together in desperate haste by frantic Ministers seeking to appease the wolves of the financial interests to whom they have surrendered

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their independence. In the preceding insatiable campaign of the big business press the alternatives were discussed by rival advocates of a wage freeze or of deflation by increased taxation to cut consumption, or of devaluation. The Government adopted both the first two, and may yet finish (like the 1931 Government which began with similar panic measures to 'save the pound' and then devalued) with devaluation also. Alongside the wage freeze Mr. Wilson claimed that the new taxation would cut home consumption by £500 million, in addition to the £700 million already cut by previous increases of taxation, and the further £300 million cut which would follow from the payroll tax, or a total of £1,500 million cut in home consumption, as against a £150 million cut in overseas expenditure. That this drastic reduction of purchasing power, alongside the intensified credit sequeze, would strangle production and bring on what is nowadays called a 'recession' was no longer only the view of angry critics; it was the boast of the Government. Previous governments had advocated panic measures as justified to combat the spectre of unemployment. Now for the first time this Government has publicly proclaimed the aim to promote unemployment.

A Programme for Unemployment

No. Not 'redeployment'—that smooth-sounding hypocritical term to describe the supposed easy transition to new jobs for all those deprived of their existing jobs by the closing of pits or railways or 'redundant' plants or through the effects of automation. For Mr. Wilson made clear in his answer in Parliament on July 20 that he expected to increase the level of unemployment throughout the country, '*after* all the reabsorption and redeployment and the measures for regional redistribution' to 'between 1½ and 2 per cent', that is 470,000, as a 'not unacceptable' figure. The previous experience of the effects of Selwyn Lloyd's far less extreme squeeze programme, which raised unemployment from 298,500 to 427,100 by December 1961, to continuous further increase through 1962, to reach 644,700 by April 1963, suggests the strong probability that the real figure of unemployment will reach considerably higher than the Government's anticipation. Certainly the Government's economic forecasting has so far proved singularly fallible. It will be recalled that as recently as March 1966 Mr. Wilson declared that 'Britain has weathered the storm', only to proclaim in July that 'Britain has been blown off course'.

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Anti-Union Offensive

And it is in the context of this grimly worsening economic prospect, deliberately planned by the Government's measures, that such significance attaches to the parallel onslaught on trade unionism to invoke police action against elementary trade union rights. For the first time since the repeal of the Combination Laws, legislation is placed on the statute book in peacetime to make a criminal offence normal operations of trade unionism, and to apply the penal clauses equally to the trade unions as organisations and to individual trade unionists, trade union officials, shop stewards or other workers who may use their organised strength to win wage increases contrary to the wishes of the Government. Such an offensive from a Tory Government would arouse the united resistance of the entire trade union and labour movement. The offensive is all the more serious when it is launched in the name of a Labour Government. A trade union movement which failed to resist such an offensive would be signing its own death-warrant.

Mr. Wilson's Waterloo

Mr. Wilson began his term of office as Prime Minister by proclaiming his 'Hundred Days'. This would-be emulation of Napoleon, imitated at second hand from President Kennedy, was not even original. But he forgot that the real Hundred Days ended in Waterloo, which ushered in a long reign of reaction in Europe—until the left arose anew. Never in modern political history in Britain has the descent from the stratosphere of high-flown electoral promises about the new technological revolution, dynamic planning, industrial expansion and rising standards to the grim realities of capitalism been so rapid. No originality is required to criticise the present policies of this July programme of the Labour Government. It is only necessary to quote what Mr. Wilson himself said as Leader of the Opposition to criticise the policies of the preceding Tory Government. This is the situation which throws such a sharp responsibility of decision on every Labour Party member, MP and conference delegate at this moment, comparable to the responsibilities which it is now universally admitted should have been faced in time (as the Communists and all on the left then urged) in relation to the policies of Ramsay MacDonald before those policies culminated in the collapse of 1931.

Loyalty—To What?

Apologists of the Government attempt to offer as their main plea,

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in order to circumvent the threatening opposition votes at the coming conferences, that the restrictionist wage-freeze stop-go anti-union measures of the July programme, however painful and unpopular, should be accepted out of 'loyalty' to the Labour Government, because the alternative would be a Tory Government. Not at all. The alternative would be to change the policy of the labour movement, both by winning decisive majorities for alternative policies at the coming conferences, and by the effective action of all sections of the organised labour movement throughout the country. The fight against Toryism is not just a fight against a group of politicians. It is the fight against Tory policies, representing the interests of big business. If a Labour Government adopts Tory policies, then it is necessary to fight and defeat such policies. The loyalty of an elected Labour representative can only be, not to an individual, but to the programme on which he is elected. That the present July programme is a complete contradiction of the initial electoral programme of the Labour Government is glaringly obvious as soon as the two programmes are compared.

Promise and Performance

The Labour electoral programme of 1964 'Let's Go With Labour for the New Britain' set in the forefront the aim to maintain 'full employment'. The July programme proclaims the aim to promote unemployment. The electoral programme called for 'a faster rate of industrial expansion'. After a year and a half of stagnation the new credit squeeze is throttling the expansion of production. The electoral programme called for 'a brake on prices' and promised to 'attack rising prices'. The $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent rise in prices under the Labour Government has exceeded the previous rate, and the new taxation is designed to accelerate this rise still further. The electoral programme promised 'low interest rates for housing' (George Brown's $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent). Mortgage rates have reached record heights at $6\frac{3}{4}$ per cent, and the Government has refused to apply a compulsory standstill to the demand of the building societies to raise them higher to $7\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. The electoral programme promised to 'increase the building of new houses'. Mr. Crossman has left behind him a falling rate of building of houses. The electoral programme promised to 'lighten the burden of rates'. Rates have soared to record heights, and the immediate effect of the present measures will ensure their further increase this year. The electoral programme placed in the forefront the pledge to establish a 'National Economic Plan' covering every industry and

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sphere of the economy, to 'energise and modernise our industries' and to ensure 'a dynamic and expanding economy'. The Government did indeed publish a vast and elaborate paper 'National Plan' covering 592 pages at £1 10s., and consisting entirely of hypothetical figures ('it isn't a plan to tell us all what to do and when and how'). On July 27 the Government announced that this 'Plan' is now dead. For any Labour representative to fail to recognise the necessity to fight and defeat this repudiation and reversal of Labour's electoral programme would not only be disloyalty to that programme and to every pledge undertaken by Labour representatives, but would be a direct blow against Labour to prepare the way for Labour's defeat at the next election (already the Gallup poll has registered an unprecedented rate of collapse from Labour's lead of 18 in May to a Tory lead of ½ by the beginning of August).

Churchill versus Wilson on Vietnam

President Johnson compared Premier Wilson to Churchill on the occasion of Mr. Wilson's visit to Washington on July 29 to report progress immediately after delivering his offensive against the British people on July 20. Praise from such a quarter is praise indeed. The only other statesman on whom the discerning Johnson has bestowed the same compliment is Marshal Ky, when President Johnson travelled to Honolulu to meet him and publicly compared Marshal Ky to Churchill. Thus Premier Wilson and Marshal 'I Love Hitler' Ky can enjoy their association as the two favourite satellite Churchills in President Johnson's harem. The comparison, however, intended to express President Johnson's appreciation of Wilson's faithful support of his war of aggression against the Vietnam people, is singularly inappropriate. For the full account recently published in France by Pierre Rouanet in the book *Mendès France in Power* has given the details of the background of the Geneva Agreement on Vietnam in 1954. The United States had already reached complete agreement with the French reactionary Government of Laniel, Bidault and Pleven to sabotage the negotiations due to open in Geneva and to take over the colonialist war against the Vietnam people, and had massed heavy air and sea forces to begin hostilities. Eden at a loss flew to London to Churchill for advice. It was Churchill who put his foot down to oppose American intervention in Indo-China, and insist on a peaceful settlement which would bar the way to the American war plans. The Vietnam victory of Dien Bien Phu brought down the Laniel Government and led to its replacement by

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Mendès France who was for peace; and so the Geneva Agreements for a peaceful Vietnam freed from foreign troops and with peaceful reunification within two years were reached with Britain and the Soviet Union as the two Co-Chairmen, and the furious Dulles refusing to sign. Thus the credit for this progressive stand at that time from Britain's side for a peaceful settlement and against the American war plans in Vietnam lay, not primarily with Suez Eden, who appeared as the protagonist, but with Churchill. This agrees with Churchill's role during this same period already analysed in the July Notes on the basis of the Moran diaries. The humiliating conclusion follows that a Tory Premier took a stand to block the way against American war plans in Vietnam, and joined with the Soviet Union in an agreement banning foreign armed intervention, while a Labour Premier has ranged Britain alone among the major powers as backing the American violation of the Geneva Agreements and massive armed invasion of Vietnam. Such a situation presents a challenge to the whole labour movement to change.

Why?

But why is the Wilson-Brown-Stewart leadership so bent on pursuing this disastrous and humiliating policy, which has brought Britain into universal international discredit and at the same time replaced the promises of home economic improvement and advance by an unprecedented succession of chronic crisis situations, giving rise to ever more desperate offensives against popular standards and consumption and demands as well as against the unions and union rights, culminating in this July programme? They cannot enjoy doing it. They are not wicked or cruel men. They cannot enjoy making Britain the satellite of what every decent person recognises to be as shameful a war of aggression and invasion in support of a puppet military dictator as ever was the invasion of Spain by Hitler and Mussolini in support of Franco in the thirties. Indeed, their recent hard-pressed manoeuvre to express public 'disassociation' from one aspect of that aggression, the bombing of the area of Hanoi and Haiphong, was a symptom, however illogical the content, of their sense of the untenability of their line of support and of the strength of popular opposition. Still less could they enjoy having to launch this ruthless Tory-type stop-go restrictionist offensive for cutting down consumption and increasing unemployment, or to have to enter into conflict with masses of workers and trade unions, their main supporters, over wages and union rights.

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Obviously they would prefer, in an expanding utopia of reformist dreams as painted in their previous platform perorations, to be handing out concessions and advances of social provision to meet the many desperate shortages of social needs in every sphere and on the basis of such achievement to bask in the midst of general popularity and enthusiasm. Then why do they not do it?

Is It Necessary?

These temporary painful and unpopular measures, we are told, are reluctantly, but courageously, undertaken to meet the desperately serious economic situation expressed in the continuing deficit on the balance of payments and the consequent international weakness of the pound. 'Britain is facing the new Dunkirk'. But Mr. Wilson, Mr. Brown, Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Crossman are intelligent men. They are well informed and have available the fullest sources of information. They know quite as well as their left critics that the deficit on the balance of payments (even in the record year 1964 and also today) is entirely caused by government overseas expenditure, mostly military, and private overseas capital investment of the big monopolies. They know that if these burdens, which it is entirely within their power to control, were removed, there would be no deficit, but a surplus. In other words, the deficit is not caused by the volume of home consumption, imports, wage levels or wage increases. This is only the fairy tale put over to secure acceptance of the demand for sacrifices at home. The demand for sacrifices by the people at home is in order to pay for the overseas expenditure of the government and the monopolies. This is regarded as the real first priority for which the people must pay. The expression of this first priority, which is the actual pivot of the Government's policy, is the unyielding insistence on what has come to be known as the 'East of Suez' policy; that Britain must remain 'a world power in a military sense' in Denis Healey's phrase at Canberra; or, as Mr. Wilson put it in Washington on July 29:

> The position is that we have a world role in foreign policy and in defence and as one of the great reserve currencies, and we mean to discharge these roles.

Why should this be the first priority even at the expense of economic worsening and the call for popular sacrifices in Britain? Here we come to the real crux of the present issue. For we come here to the fatal flaw in the whole system of reformism, which has dogged every successive Labour Government and defeated all the dreams of gradualist advance to socialism.

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Achilles' Heel of Reformism

Reformism is the creed of those who think that it is possible to make capitalism humane; that they can run capitalism more efficiently than the capitalists, with a smoothly expanding economy and ever extending social advances for the mass of the people in a welfare state. Certainly the strength of the working-class movement can win and has won important concessions and advances in the struggle against capitalism. There is nothing wrong with this aim. On the contrary, this battle is of vital importance in the advance of the working class to the aim of power in order to change the system and establish socialism. Where the reformists go wrong is in their belief that by this winning of concessions and reforms they can change the basic laws of capitalism, the real laws of motion of the capitalist jungle. Modern capitalism is monopoly capitalism, that is, imperialism. Its real operations need to be seen on a world scale: not only in the metropolitan country, with the glaring contradictions between the slums or the millions medically certified as under-nourished and the over £10,000 spent by one rich family overnight on a deb's dance,* or the cruel demands to increase unemployment in order to lower wages; but on a world scale, in Vietnam or the Congo. The young idealist sallies forth with his head bursting from his academic economic training with glowing pictures of the perspective of the new technological revolution and the marvels of beneficence of the new capitalism. When he comes into office, he finds he has to operate according to a very different set of laws, the real laws of capitalism, which are cruel laws. His followers mourn over their betrayal by another prophet whose vision had once inspired them; while he deplores the mass ignorance of the 'easie-oosie asses' who fail to understand the real problems of the nation.

Fabian Fallacy

Sidney and Beatrice Webb were brilliant, tireless and sincere researchers and reformers, who did more than any other two mortals

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* Sidelights on the fulfilment of the Wilson-Brown-Callaghan principle of 'equality of sacrifice' and 'equal restriction of all incomes':

No one mentions money; Anna's mother says she does not even ask for estimates . . . 'They're not skimping', said one of the interior decorators. 'Ten thousand for the whole dance, I'd say'. It might be more; it won't be very much under.

'A Deb's Dance': *Sunday Times*, August 7, 1966

The real significance of the reappearance of rickets in white children in Britain is that it reflects a low standard of nutrition which is probably widespread . . . It has been suggested that a quarter to a third of the people of Britain live in households which fail to attain all the desirable levels of dietary intake.

British Medical Journal editorial, March 5, 1966

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to inspire and initiate the great social reforms of the pre-1914 era. When 1914 exploded their world, they admitted that they had never given attention to what they called 'international politics', that is, the real operations of capitalism. When 1931 and Sidney's experience in the Ministry of MacDonald reinforced the demonstration of the bankruptcy of reformism, they were sincere and courageous enough to recognise the lesson, wrote their book on 'Soviet Communism, A New Civilisation', and placed on record in Beatrice Webb's *Post-script* in 1948 their final verdict that where they had gone 'hopelessly wrong' was in their failure to recognise the correctness of the Marxist analysis of capitalism. But of course the old Fabian fallacy goes gaily marching on in ceaselessly renewed later costumes by its current exponents. Strachey wrote his *Contemporary Capitalism* in 1956 to disprove the Marxism he once thought he was expounding, and to celebrate the beneficent marvels of modern capitalism under Labour guidance, but modestly omitted his own role as Minister of War putting through German rearmament or photographed in uniform stalking Communists in the jungles of Malaya. Shonfield last year repeated the dose with his *Modern Capitalism* to proclaim his conversion from his impressions during the thirties about the 'ineradicable destructiveness' of capitalism, and to celebrate the 'dynamism and orderliness' of modern state monopoly capitalism—a celebration rendered easier by the complete omission from his picture of any reference to the cold war, Korea, Vietnam, the atom bomb, the CIA or other manifestations of the 'dynamism and orderliness' of 'modern capitalism'.

Theory and Practice

When the exponents of these eloquent theories of reformism reach office, the contradiction between their theories and practice becomes glaring and leads to political catastrophes—not because they are wicked men or deliberately insincere, but because the reformist theories they have preached bear no relation to the harsh realities of capitalism. MacDonald won mass support as the supposed champion of the fight against the first imperialist world war, and became Prime Minister to put through the orders of the New York bankers for a 10 per cent cut. Attlee and Bevin swept into office in the tide of mass enthusiasm for the joint victory of the peoples over fascism and the alliance with the Soviet Union, and proceeded to organise the cold war, German rearmament and the wage freeze at home. Harold Wilson was undoubtedly sincere when he won the applause of conferences with his glowing pictures of the marvels of

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the new scientific and technological revolution which would replace the stop-go stagnation of Toryism with a continuously expanding economy and rising standards. When he came to office he found he had to carry through offensive after offensive, culminating in this July programme; and his early glib explanation to attribute all the troubles to the thirteen lost years of Toryism has now, after a year and a half of further deterioration, requiring still more savage offensives, begun to lose confidence and sound like a cracked record. The fancy picture of the happy future reformist utopia, when the people will be able to enjoy all the fruits of modern scientific and technological advance without having to expropriate the big monopolists and take possession of the means of production, has not been explicitly abandoned; it is still on the shelf, ready to be dusted and taken down on some suitable future occasion. But at the moment, in face of the grim realities of modern capitalism and its practical requirements which the present Government is engaged in enforcing, the fancy picture has become as inappropriate and faded as the paper 'National Plan' whose abandonment has had to be officially announced.

Mirage of Britain's 'World Power'

When Mr. Wilson or Mr. Healey or Mr. Brown or Mr. Stewart insist on the paramount necessity to maintain Britain as a 'world power', and explain that by this they mean a 'world military power' with a 'military presence' in distant oceans and a 'world financial power' with sterling operating as a world currency, that is, as a world imperialist power; and when they maintain that this is the pivot for Britain's economy, justifying and requiring the utmost sacrifices from the people in Britain, they are serious and on their grounds justified in this contention. For Britain's economy is a world imperialist economy, requiring the concomitants of imperialist power for its maintenance. The British financial oligarchy, operating from the City of London, is engaged in a system of world imperialist exploitation. For them Britain is a base, whose domestic requirements need to be subordinated to the requirements of the world imperialist system of exploitation. Hence the relative lag in the rate of Britain's domestic industrial and technical development in comparison with other European powers, alongside precedence in financial imperialist development. From this contradiction the resultant problems flow. The weakening of Britain's domestic economy, consequent on imperialism, in turn weakens the basis for

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maintaining the imperialist world power, once the old direct colonial system is ended. Hence the chronic crisis and calls for sacrifices from the home population in the modern period.

Mr. Wilson's Dilemma

Mr. Wilson and his colleagues, having based themselves on the reformist first premise that the only 'practical' policy is to work for improvements within the framework of capitalism, have inevitably discovered that this means in practice working within the framework of the existing imperialist economy, and that they have as a result inherited the contradiction of the present stage of the imperialist system. All the urgent requirements of domestic industrial and social reconstruction of which they are conscious are thwarted by the requirements for maintaining the world imperialist exploitation and its system of power. On the other hand, they know that the apparently easy solution offered by some critics, namely that the abolition of the overseas military expenditure and export of capital would remove the deficit and replace it by a surplus, however mathematically correct, is by itself a dangerous over-simplification. For it assumes that the large 'invisibles' income, on the other side of the account, which is to a very considerable degree the reflection of the imperialist exploitation and power and requires the continuous export of capital for its maintenance, would continue unchanged. But the two sides of the imperialist economy cannot be thus separated: they are two sides of one coin. Therefore the transference to an alternative basis, removing the waste overseas burdens from Britain's economy, would require at the same time the transformation of Britain's domestic economy to a non-imperialist basis. This means a direct challenge to the biggest monopolies (the biggest monopolies are overseas operating monopolies like the big oil companies and ICI) and financial interests dominating Britain. For such an alternative as the indispensable solution to Britain's present problem the left is more and more clearly fighting, as shown in the resolutions of the Left Labour MPs and of many union conferences, which combine the demand for the cutting of the waste overseas expenditure with the demand for the decisive extension of public ownership at home. But Mr. Wilson and his colleagues, on the basis of their reformist preconceptions, shrink from the revolutionary implications of such a challenge. Therefore they are compelled to adopt the alternative policy, to launch the offensive against the workers in order to make them pay for the present difficulties of British finance-capital.

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Battle for Britain's Future

Thus the battle which is now opening in industry and the trade unions to defeat the offensive of the wage freeze and the Prices and Incomes Act; which will reach the sharpest confrontation on a whole series of issues in the coming TUC and Labour Party Conference; and which is extending over the entire political field—this battle is manifestly revealing itself as a battle for the whole future of Britain. The angry retort of Mr. Wilson and his friends that the resistance to the demand for sacrifices in order to maintain Britain as a 'world power' is equivalent to renouncing the 'world responsibilities' of Britain and reducing Britain to the status of a minor European country singularly recalls the cry of 'Little Englanders' launched by the jingoes in the early years of this century against the anti-imperialists. The contrary is the case. The 'world power' which Mr. Wilson and the Tories pursue is already a mirage, no longer believed in by the rest of the world, and covering the reality of a shameful satellite role. But the pursuit of this objective is destroying Britain, and thereby rendering all the more unrealisable the mythical objective for the sake of which the sacrifices are demanded.

Positive Alternative

On the other hand, the concrete alternative programme presented by the left offers a positive future for Britain: equally the achievement of urgently needed social advance of the people at home; the reorganisation of industry and the economy to displace the domination of the big monopolies and extend public ownership; and at the same time on this basis the fulfilment of a real world role by Britain, winning the respect of other nations, on the side of peace, liberation from imperialism and co-operation with all the advancing peoples of the world. Such are the broader aims which are involved in the present concrete fight on concrete immediate issues: to defeat the Prices and Incomes Act; to end the support of the United States war on Vietnam; to bar the way to a deal with the racialists in Rhodesia; to extend public ownership. For the success of this fight the unity of all on the left, trade unionists, co-operators, Labour and Communist, as well as the wide groupings of supporters of peace, fighters against racialism, and active young people, will be essential in order to win these immediate objectives on which there is already general agreement among all sections of the left, and the winning of which can open the way to transform the political situation in Britain.

R.P.D.

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TRADE UNIONS: OUR DECLARATION OF INTENT

L. G. Guy*

AT the forthcoming Blackpool Trades Union Congress, a 'Declaration of Intent' of the unions needs to be adopted condemning the prices and incomes policy, the wage freeze and the legislation against trade unions and officials for doing the job they are elected and organised to do.

This policy is designed to create massive unemployment, not growth of the economy. If wished upon us by the Tories, it would have been the basis for a general strike, but at this time, in loyalty to the Labour Government, many trade unions turn their back on their membership and support a policy which is the very antithesis of all the trade union movement has stood for in its very long history. Little wonder that Frank Cousins saw this as an issue important enough to lead him to resign his Ministry. But the fight is not his alone: he speaks and speaks well for his members. What other trade unions will now speak for theirs? Already, alongside the T & GWU, other unions have declared their opposition to the Prices and Incomes Act and anti-trade union legislation, such as the Draughtsmen, the Scientific Workers, the Sheet Metal Workers and Scottish Miners, etc. When the Tories instituted the 'stop-go' policy, the Labour Party and Mr. Wilson were also most vocal in their opposition, yet now when the Labour Government seek to follow the old Tory pattern, unions seek to deny their membership and join Wilson in his somersaulting act. And somersault it is, for in 1964 the TUC supported the following policy:

> This Congress reiterates its opposition to the attempted imposition of an Incomes Policy, which has as its aim the restraint of wage and salary increases. It believes that trade union negotiations with employers backed by a strong trade union organisation, and free from arbitrary Government interference, are the most effective mediums for improving living standards and working conditions.

The Labour Party membership and the trade unions who have stood four-square for socialism, nationalisation, the reduction and elimination of exploitation, are now asked to put their strength behind

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a policy devised by the same Civil Service economists who acted for the Tories a few years ago.

What a slippery slope! First the Declaration of Intent and the Guiding Light of 3 per cent to 3½ per cent given TUC blessing, with each union supporting with its tongue in its cheek—'doesn't mean us, it's those others'. Then the threat of compulsion brought about by the failure of the so-called controlled National Growth Policy. Who really believed a capitalist economy could be controlled? Its main feature is economic anarchy: to control it one must change it. Now the freeze and legislation, Guiding Light January 1967—nil! Incomes Policy? Never has there been a title so divorced from the facts. I suggest it be renamed—Trade Unions in Shackles Policy.

How far can our loyalty to the Labour Government be stretched? Selwyn Lloyd could not sell it to us, but we buy it from Harold Wilson! Does any socialist and trade unionist expect that a foreign policy designed to support the Americans in their escalation of the war in Vietnam, a cowardly capitulation to Ian Smith in Rhodesia, borrowing capital from the traditional capitalist moneylenders, a Government confrontation with the Seamen's Union when the seamen's employers were the real enemy, would bring the country to economic solvency and begin the road to socialism? I doubt it, so why even consider these economic and legal restrictions on the movement so that such policies can continue? Loyalty to poor and shabby policies will not strengthen the Labour Party and the trade unions, or solve our economic difficulties, for if such policies could perform this miracle, the Tories would have performed it. And if trade unions are to say to their members that from January 1, 1967, the norm for increases in wages and conditions is nil, why should they continue membership of their unions, and why should new members seek membership? The trade unions can only continue in business as organisations that seek to defend and advance the conditions of their membership and to support and promote a political party that is pledged to full employment and the building of a socialist Britain.

If at this year's TUC the Government wins support for its policies, what will the trade unions do when the membership revolts against falling conditions and standards, and trade union officials who seek to be of service to their members and trade union principles are faced with fines, even imprisonment? Turn their back on them? Act the statesman? Remember, the unions may be called upon to perform a similar act if the Tories get back into power, for anti-

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trade union legislation will then have had trade union support and we have yet to face the recommendations of the Commission on Trade Unions. It is well known that many organisations who have submitted evidence are calling for the very same legislated restrictions on the movement which the Government's policy now threatens us with and demand even stronger measures. Can the TUC, once having given the green light to the present legislation, maintain an argument against recommendations that may come from the Royal Commission?

Wage freezes have been tried before. The Tories and Stafford Cripps each had their turn and were roundly condemned by the labour movement. On each occasion it has been the workpeople, the trade unionists who have suffered and paid for it, for there is no way of freezing profits and dividends. If extra dividends are held back and even put into new capital investment, this must at some stage increase profits and dividends to be paid in the future. This can never be the case for wages, for once gone they are never recoverable. In fact the White Paper makes it quite clear they must not be recovered.

The freezing of prices has been tabled as if it is something new. This has also been done before—'freeze wages and prices will not rise', but they did rise and are rising at this time. Ask any housewife what has happened to her housekeeping budget over the last few weeks. It is no good Ministers shaking their fists and saying how disappointed they are. What does one do with the odd penny on the item, which may be a seasonable item as referred to in the White Paper; who knows if the shirt or suit you buy on the odd occasion has not been increased, for your last comparison was perhaps months or years ago, and what about this property-owning society and its mortgage rates? When will the Government speak with the same severity to these leeches as they do to working people? Or have they found in their discussions with the Building Societies that they are a clear and obvious example of a capitalist money-lending organisation which if controlled or restricted within the anarchy of a capitalist economy cannot function? If they looked a little closer, they would find this true of all capitalist organisations they seek to restrict. What about house prices themselves? Are they to be frozen at their present exorbitant level? Speculative builders must be rushing home from the Bahamas in panic! What of rents, rates, taxes, fares? These are not to be controlled, yet they form the largest part of any household budget.

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This is not the road for the trade unions: should we not be warned by President Johnson and other capitalist moneylenders' support for this policy? Do they usually applaud the growth of socialism, or do they seek to deal it a blow from which it may never recover? I suggest the latter is the answer and Harold Wilson running cap-in-hand to the United States will not alter their political thinking. More likely ours is warped by the contact.

Is there an alternative? Is the policy of Frank Cousins, that economic growth must be encouraged not choked, a possibility? Yes, and the trade unions and the Labour Party have always said so. What has changed? Labour policy has changed. They shy away from nationalisation; they support war in Vietnam; they back away from Ian Smith; they institute taxes that slow the economy; they propose legislation against trade unions; fines, imprisonment and fines stopped from the pay packet! They continue arms expenditure far beyond the capacity of the economy and they now propose half a million unemployed! The movement must again return to policies the rank and file support and are not ashamed of:

A massive reduction in arms expenditure, now running at over £67 per second, and withdraw support for the Vietnam war;

Full support for trade unionists to secure the highest possible increases out of profits;

Bring troops back home and place them into the vacancies in industry;

Real control of overseas investments. Britain needs the capital herself;

Realistic interest rates to Councils, where now 15s. in every pound of Council Rents is interest on the capital loaned;

Extension of nationalisation (not just steel, to show the Labour Party still has socialist tendencies), for there cannot be socialism without public ownership; and

Increase trade with socialist countries (such as Leyland's bus plant in Russia).

Stop pouring our money down the drain of Tory foreign policy and free ourselves from the clutches of capitalist moneylenders. If we have to tighten our belts, let it be for socialism, not the continuance of right-wing policy. It is together with other socialist countries that we will build socialism at home, and in doing so solve our economic problems.

Let the TUC proudly lead the people to economic and political achievement, for nothing is to be gained by being named 'statesman-like' if this means selling out one's own members: the real statesmen are all those, including the group of Labour MPs who are leading the struggle against the incomes policy. Let the TUC bring support for them.

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SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

Ruth First

IN what has sarcastically been called a 'non-judgement' the International Court at The Hague on July 18 rejected the case of Liberia and Ethiopia (acting for the African States) against South Africa in which they charged that the application of apartheid to South-West Africa violates the 'sacred trust' of the mandate. The rejection was on the grounds that Liberia and Ethiopia have no legal standing before the Court on this issue. A case begun six full years ago in which massive volumes of evidence were accumulated, interminable hours spent in the presentation and cross-examination of evidence and in abstruse legal argument, and on which millions of pounds have been spent, has thus ended in unparalleled futility.

Ethiopia and Liberia were asking the Court to confirm earlier advisory opinions that the mandate was still in force and that South Africa has obligations with regard to United Nations supervision. The applicants went further to ask the Court to declare that by a formidable catalogue of acts—establishing military bases in the territory, applying discriminatory legislation, thwarting self-government, unilaterally modifying the terms of the mandate—South Africa has violated the mandate.

The judgement given was a technical one. There was no decision on the merits. There is on record no finding for or against apartheid, or for or against the allegation of a breach of mandate principle. In effect the Court declined jurisdiction, stopping at 'the threshold of the case', as the strong dissenting judgement of the United States Judge Jessop said.

And this, in July 1966, was in flat contradiction of a decision on the identical preliminary procedural point which the same Court decided the opposite way four years ago, in 1962. Between then and now the bench of 17 judges was depleted by three (the UAR judge died, the judge from Peru was too ill to sit, and the judge from Pakistan recused himself under what now appears to be, from his post-judgement statement, the ominous pressure of the Court President, Sir Percy Spender of Australia). A 7-7 deadlock was swung to South Africa's side by Sir Percy Spender's casting vote, thus converting a 1962 minority of the Court into a 1966 majority, and reversing the Court's earlier stand that jurisdiction *had* been

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established. (It is worth noting in passing that the point on which the Court disqualified Liberia and Ethiopia was not even advanced by South Africa's lawyers in their final submissions.)

It must also be recalled that the mandate agreement negotiated after Versailles imposed a special obligation in article 7 (2) on the submission to the International Court of disputes over the control of a mandated territory that could not be settled by negotiation. The Court has, by its latest judgement, neatly abdicated its responsibility as an international mediator, and this must confirm the suspicions of the Afro-Asian countries that the Court, like other international organisations and forums, is being used as an essentially Western Big Power instrument to forestall decision and action, specially where the liberation of subject peoples is at stake. For, essentially, this is the wheel of persistent procrastination that has once again come full circle.

The mandate system devised after world war one was a compromise offered in the face of demands for the self-determination of peoples. Blatant annexation of the spoils of conquest would not do in the face of brave speeches about the new world, but nor would full independence of former German colonies in Africa. So selected mandatory powers were given control of peoples 'not yet able to stand by themselves in the strenuous conditions of the modern world' and these powers, South Africa and Britain amongst them for South-West Africa and Tanganyika respectively, were shouldered with a 'sacred trust' to advance these peoples to independence. Smuts' South Africa used the mandatory system as a cover for virtual annexation of the territory, laying down patterns of administration à la segregation which Malan and Verwoerd inherited and absorbed only too easily into apartheid after the second world war.

In its day the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission as the international supervisory authority proved ineffective in achieving any reversal of South African policy. Criticism of South Africa was persistent if mild but for the most part the Mandates Commission was a conference room dominated by the colonial powers whose own policies would not bear too strong scrutiny, and Africa, Asia and the Socialist world had not yet come into their own. League machinery was in any case without power to correct abuses.

With the foundation of the United Nations, South Africa alone, of all the mandatory powers, refused to enter into a trusteeship agreement for South-West Africa. Then began years of prolonged

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international inertia as South Africa defiantly thumbed her nose at the world body. Innumerable resolutions of condemnation have by now been passed, culminating in 1960, the year of Sharpeville and the accession of many African states to the United Nations, in the General Assembly characterisation of the apartheid presence in South-West Africa as 'a serious threat to international peace and security' (Resolution of December 18, 1960).

But, strong condemnation apart, the United Nations has to date proved as powerless to act as the League before it. Not that the United Nations lacks the machinery. The General Assembly could, as the next step in its handling of the South-West Africa issue, recommend that South Africa be deprived of the mandate, and the Security Council could apply binding force to such a decision, exercising its powers under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter. The machinery is there, but in crucial votes South Africa's principal trading partners have abstained from voting and have declined to use UN machinery because their policy is governed not by principle but by their financial stakes in Southern Africa. For all the unqualified condemnation of South Africa's policies and the far-reaching steps advocated by UN committees, within the Security Council three powers holding the veto—Britain, the United States and France—have not supported action under Chapter 7 of the Charter. Thus, in the demand for collective measures against South Africa to break her stranglehold on SWA, deadlock has been reached.

The case at The Hague was initiated by some of those anxious for action but rendered ineffective by the Western-created impasse on the Security Council. As the African states conceived it, the case was to lay the groundwork for the political enforcement of a judgement by the Security Council, and to use, in addition to all the other reasons for action, Article 94 (2) of the Charter which empowers the Security Council to decide upon measures to give effect to Court judgements. The African states which initiated the Court action looked hopefully to The Hague to remove the legal reservations to firm decision on which Britain and other powers leaned so conveniently. To the powers blocking action the Court case was seen in another light: it could while it lasted be yet another opportunity to place restraints on the Afro-Asian demand for action. Within the South-West African liberation movements political councils were somewhat divided on the advisability of taking yet another case (after the three Advisory Opinions already obtained) to The Hague but once the long-drawn-out procedures were begun there was no option but

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to hope that the Court decision would reinforce the already powerful case for international action. There was, of course, always the danger that the Court would deliver a divided, ambiguous judgement giving South Africa, a past master at equivocation and temporising, fresh time in which to play on the reluctance of the Big Powers to act by going back and forth to the Court and the United Nations to ask for more detailed interpretations and 'guidance'. A strong Court judgement against South Africa would have left Britain and the West with fewer arguments for inaction to protect South Africa. For though it is political and not legal reservations that have inhibited Big Power action, satisfying the legal aspects of the Case with International Court authority would have helped erode the resistance to action.

The Court Case brooding over the United Nations has for the last six years afforded the Western Powers—with some notable exceptions like the Scandinavian countries which have sharpened their attitude to the issue—a continuing legal pretext for procrastination. Perhaps, paradoxically, the futility of the Court proceedings will do a service to the South-West African case in high-lighting the political realities of South-West Africa, and, indeed, of all Southern Africa. The SWA issue is not a legal problem, but a political one. Action against South Africa needs not the consent of lawyers and courts but the will and pressure of political forces. The United Nations is still fully seized of the SWA question. Nothing said or left unsaid at the International Court changes this. There need be no puzzlement about the next steps to be taken. These should be the declaration of South Africa's mandate over SWA to be null and void. South Africa's record in the territory, her intransigence in the world community, disqualify her for any future role *vis-à-vis* the future of the territory; and the practice of apartheid is too intrinsic a feature of her administration and control for it to be broken, even if there were, suddenly, any promise on the part of South Africa to chart new courses.

Six years have now been lost, six crucial years in which South Africa has tightened and extended the workings of apartheid in SWA, and in which South Africa herself has been strengthened by her western allies, with a happy accretion of profits to international as well as South African investors.

SWA is South Africa's colony but she is also the colony of Britain and the United States, a colony of the western world. An average of 32 per cent per annum of the country's domestic product was paid to foreigners in the years 1958 to 1962, and this drain has been

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growing in recent years. SWA's large excess of exports over imports makes her capable of supporting balanced economic development for all her people, but at present this surplus is frittered away, and most of it accrues to the foreign corporations which exploit the mineral wealth of the country. The economic growth of the territory has been based on the exploitation of wasting assets, the wealth of the copper and diamond mines. This wealth has been used to finance high levels of consumption for the Whites and handsome foreign dividends and apartheid has been an invaluable instrument in laying down these lines of development. In SWA apartheid is more complete by far than in South Africa itself. Africans are restricted to the stagnant, subsistence sector of the economy; Whites have thrived in the modern, developed sector. The only exchange between the two sectors is African migrant labour which is permitted into the modern sector only for the duration of labour contracts. The few available figures of standards of living reflect an enormous disparity between white and African populations. The gap between the two groups is far greater than in South Africa, and in SWA even more than in South Africa, apartheid has blocked the African population from helping itself. Papers submitted to the International Conference on South-West Africa held at Oxford in March of this year show conclusively how the economic policy pursued by South Africa has been to achieve White advance at the expense of African stagnation, how the result has been to waste the wealth which a poor people needed for economic growth, and how the effects of these economic policies has been to ensure that economic development for the majority of the population will be a more difficult task in the future than it would have been had an independent administration been created before now.

This last point is important. Every year that a solution to the crisis is delayed, SWA stands to lose material wealth and possibilities for development. It is estimated that SWA's diamond resources will last another 12 years and copper another 20 to 25 years. South Africa, the United States and Britain are well set to exploit the wealth of the territory until the assets that were to be used for the subjects of a trust are exhausted. In less than a generation SWA will have to make do without the two main props of its existing prosperity.

The Oxford Conference went on record as follows, in the course of its lengthy findings:

> Mineral resources are being plundered; they may well be entirely exhausted in the next 20 years. The vast export surplus they yield, instead of being used for the development of the territory, flows out as dividends to non-residents.

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> Income disparities are growing . . . The fragmenting and divisive effects of apartheid are steadily increasing. To avoid great human suffering; to safeguard the economic future of the territory; to remove almost unbelievable injustice; to eliminate a source of disaffection and instability for the whole continent, the removal of South-West Africa from the control of South Africa is a matter of desperate urgency.
>
> (Findings of Commission 2.)

'A source of disaffection and instability for the whole continent.' Unresolved the SWA issue offers a licence for aggression against a state not only without the declaration of war (an old-fashioned notion, admittedly) but also under cover of an international system of trust and with international inaction that must, in practice, amount to acceptance. (The meaning of this for international law does not seem to have bothered its custodians at The Hague.)

Apartheid, left to entrench itself, has become a more powerful adversary: a modernised state within the borders of South Africa; a predatory colonial power over the borders into SWA; and the White-domination garrison state confronting all of Southern Africa, blocking the liberation of other as well as its own subject African populations, undermining the security and now threatening the consolidation and advance of African independence further north.

In a paper on *South-West Africa: The Defence Position* to the Oxford Conference, Richard Gott remarked that in strategic value alone SWA is worth more to South Africa than several years' defence budgets put together. Its geographic position makes it South Africa's defence against African advance in Angola; by almost completing the encirclement of Bechuanaland (to be independent Botswana shortly) it is a constant pressure against independent policies there. It is an additional bastion against possible majority rule in Rhodesia. And through its link with the tiny but crucial Caprivi strip (administered by South Africa as a part of SWA) it affords a forward base, 500 miles nearer to Independent Africa than the border of the northernmost province of South Africa. The construction of an £8 million South African airbase on the Caprivi strip and South Africa's aircraft with a range of 1,900 miles bring South Africa, within striking range of most of West, Central and East Africa.

SWA is, should be, a crucial international issue on its own merits. It is also crucial to the future of all Southern Africa. The Rhodesian crisis and the limping sanctions applied by Britain are part of the problem of a confrontation with Verwoerd, for behind Smith stands Verwoerd and a victory for Verwoerd on any issue is a strengthening of Smith. The stirring progress of Frelimo guerilla fighters in the

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north of Mozambique striking formidable blows in Southern Africa's first armed struggle will need allied supporting struggles in other parts of the sub-continent. The African states, singly and in the OAU, will not rest secure while the Verwoerd-Smith-Salazar garrison further south supplies mercenary armies.

Some re-thinking and re-planning must be done in Africa on the problem of Southern Africa. All too often recently declarations of intent have foundered on sour realities of cold war alignment or the search for the glow of Western approval or comfort in high office. The statement issued by KANU in Kenya after The Hague judgement was absolutely correct. It called for 'a more militant and violent struggle against racialism in Africa' and for OAU to arm Africans under White domination. The African states, it added, are pledged to help freedom fighters to secure the independence of the whole continent. 'This pledge must now be redeemed. Oppressed people in Africa must be prepared to shed their blood.'

Nothing wrong with that. Just what Southern Africa needs and must prepare for. But who in Africa and in the OAU can so soon have forgotten that if Kenya had not played so subservient a role to Britain when a new loan of £18 million to compensate settlers for their land was being concluded, she might have stood by Tanzania in that country's lonely but principled effort to force Britain into action against Smith's UDI Declaration, and have left the OAU less enfeebled at a crucial stage in the Rhodesian crisis?

A sharpening of African states' policy on issues like SWA and all others related to the future of Southern Africa could bring a decisive weapon into play. Britain, the United States, France and other powers must be made to choose between the African states and the White dictatorships in Africa. The weapon is in the hands of the Afro-Asian states but even sharper weapons are in the hands of the peoples of the garrison states of Southern Africa. The end of an era of moral condemnation, of legal points and interminable debate must usher in a new period for joint strategy in Southern Africa where struggle will be the instrument to precipitate changes on a Southern African and an international plane.

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H. G. Wells on Socialism — Sixty Years Ago

(Herbert George Wells was born on September 21, 1866, and died on August 13, 1946. His scientific romances and social satires have become part of world literature, and all civilised countries are paying tribute to them this month, as well as to his later activity as world historiographer in Outline of History.* *Wells'*

* *Labour Monthly* was pleased to print a contribution from H. G. Wells to a symposium on *Press Freedom in Wartime* in May 1941.

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Socialism, set forth in three main books—Anticipations (*1900*), A Modern Utopia (*1905*), New Worlds For Old (*1908*)—*is less highly thought of. Its constant assumptions—that an educated middle class would decide whether there would be an advance to Socialism, that private business paying wages would still exist in Socialist society, that the British Empire could be painlessly transformed on Socialist lines—and its regular misrepresentation of Marxism, were initially rooted in the propaganda of the Fabian Society, although he soon showed himself on the right even there. Yet there was a moment when Wells spoke as the famous pioneers of Socialism had spoken. It was at the height of the Russian Revolution of 1905, particularly after the General Strike of October that year, which was calling forth answering thunders throughout Asia and Europe. He wrote an article,* This Misery of Boots, *for the December, 1905, number of* The Independent Review: *later (1907) it was republished by the Fabian Society as a pamphlet, with some discreet alterations. The following extract is from the original text.*—A.F.R.)

SOCIALISM aims to make a new world out of the old. It can only be attained by the intelligent, outspoken, courageous resolve of a great multitude of men and women. You must get absolutely clear in your mind that Socialism means a complete change, a break with history, with much that is picturesque; whole classes will vanish. The nice, rich old ladies who sustain begging-letter writers will have to do with moderate old-age pensions; and the begging-letter writers will have to work. The nice, rich young men who sustain what are called 'bijou-establishments' will have to become useful too. Great numbers of domestic servants will have to seek other employments; enormous quantities of villa residences will go begging. All the different trades and industries will be changed, the theatrical trade, the clerical trade, schools, hotels, almost every trade will have to undergo as complete an internal change as a caterpillar does when it becomes a moth. If you are afraid of as much as that, it is better you should funk about it now than later. The whole system has to be changed if we are to get rid of masses of dull poverty that render our present state detestable to any sensitive man or woman. That, and no less, is the aim of all sincere Socialists: the establishment of a new and better order of society by the abolition of private property in land, in natural production and in their exploitation*—a change as profound as the abolition of private property in slaves would have been in ancient Rome or Athens. If you demand less than that, if you are not prepared to struggle for that, you are not really a Socialist.

* Which meant, in the language of that day, the natural wealth of the earth—vegetable, animal and mineral—and its collecting, working up in factories, transporting, buying and selling.

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PALACE GOVERNMENT IN GREECE

Diana Pym

IT is now over a year since King Constantine forced the resignation of his Centre Union Prime Minister, George Papandreou, when he refused to allow him to take over the Ministry of Defence.

In February 1964, the Centre Union had received 53 per cent of the votes cast in 'probably the most free election ever held in Greece' (*Guardian*, June 11, 1966). However, the defeated right-wing party (ERE), the Palace and the powerful secret society of right-wing army officers (IDEA) would not accept defeat and on July 15, 1965, they succeeded in getting Papandreou out. The basic issue was whether the army should be under the control of the elected Government or under the personal control of the King and his nominees.

It was not until September 1965—at the third attempt—that the King succeeded in getting 46 Centre Union MPs to defect and thus obtain a majority of three with the support of 99 ERE MPs and eight of Markezinis' Progressive Party. The new Premier, Stefanopoulos, a defector from the Centre Union, was thus completely at the mercy of the right wingers, whom he had been elected to oppose. Every single one of the Centre Union defectors ('apostates' as they are known in Greece) has a ministerial post—most of them have other benefits as well. CIA dollars flowed with unprecedented lavishness.

During its term of office, the Stefanopoulos Government has hardly been able to get any controversial legislation through Parliament. The only important Act passed was one under which political prisoners could be released on five years' probation. Today, all but eight of the old prisoners have been freed, but the iniquitous Law 375, under which they were sentenced, remains on the statute book so that political opponents can still be sentenced to death by military courts should they think it necessary. 'New' political prisoners are being added all the time, mainly for taking part in demonstrations against the Government.

The reason for the introduction of this measure, which was agreed by all parties, is interesting. According to the Greek Information Office in London: 'The (Stefanopoulos) Government had

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decided to liquidate definitely the question of the so-called political prisoners . . . *so as to put an end to the largely superfluous fuss around this question*'. Let all who helped to create that 'fuss' take note!

Today, the Stefanopoulos Government is so discredited that many ERE MPs wish to dissociate themselves from it because they fear that some of its unpopularity will rub off on them if they continue to keep it in office. On June 8 the ERE 'token' Minister without portfolio resigned and several ERE MPs threatened to vote against the Government and were only prevented from bringing it down by a hasty summons to the Palace. This episode provoked ex-Premier Papandreou to make his most open attack to date on King Constantine. According to *The Times* of July 25, he said:

> There is no crowned democracy. The King not only reigns but rules and he rules both government and parliament . . . the King preserves Greece in the present state of decay and degeneration.

In his first open attack on King Constantine, *The Times* continues, he said that all Greek political parties were opposed to a dictatorship but the 'whisper of a coup' was still to be heard.

The aim of King Constantine, his stooge Government, the ruling clique of army officers and the CIA, is probably 'creeping fascism' by means of another 'orchestrated' election like the one in 1961. But there is evidence that an army coup is also being prepared in case an electoral coup proves impractical. A number of softening up measures have been taken and others are being prepared; most important is the purge of all Centre Union or liberal-minded army officers (there are no known lefts) who emerged during the Papandreou Government. The officers accused of the so-called 'Aspida Plot' are being held in military prisons under appalling conditions and under constant pressure to 'confess' and implicate others in an alleged plot of liberal-minded officers. It is generally believed that the Aspida affair was a provocation organised by right-wing army officers to distract attention from their own undoubted participation in the 1961 electoral coup.

In addition, any officers suspected of liberal tendencies are transferred to remote commands well away from the main towns and any conscripts known to be from left-wing families, sons of political prisoners or members of the Lambrakis Democratic Youth movement are singled out for special treatment. They are asked to write essays denouncing their opinions or those of their parents and sent to military prisons if they refuse. Sometimes they are drafted to the Special Military Security Units to spy on their comrades. Again,

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refusal means prison. Others are denied leave and sent to remote places in the northern mountains as 'mule guides'.

In spite of all this, however, there is a growing disgust among army officers at being used as pawns in the politicians' games and it is by no means certain that the Greek army can yet be relied on to carry out a coup. The same sort of process is taking place in the police forces: right wingers are systematically replacing more democratically-minded officers who had been promoted by Papandreou.

The first target for attack is undoubtedly the Lambrakis Democratic Youth, the only really mass organisation of young people that extends throughout Greece. King Constantine has sought the dissolution of the Lambrakides for a considerable time. It was revealed at a Crown Council last year that he had pressed Papandreou to ban the movement before he was forced out of office in July 1965, and before the nightly demonstrations, mainly of young people, protesting against the royal overthrow of the elected Government.

However, it was not until July 18, 1966, after Parliament had been prorogued for an extra long summer recess, that Mr. Stefanopoulos' 'Palace Government' introduced a Bill, which it laid before the Recess Committee under the terms of which it would be possible to ban the Lambrakides. This Committee functions when Parliament is in recess and can pass most types of legislation. The Bill does not specifically mention the Lambrakis Democratic Youth, but the entire Greek press got the message and the right-wing *Kathimerini* wrote on July 12, 1966:

> The Government must hurry through an act of the Ministerial Council—until such time as the Bill is passed—to dissolve not only the Lambrakis Youth, but every single organisation—and there are many under various pretexts— . . . which come under the Popular Front.

Three Labour MPs (Messrs. R. Freeson, P. Jackson and S. Orme) who had seen the Lambrakides in action when they participated in the Marathon to Athens Peace March last May, collected 20 signatures of MPs to a letter of protest to Premier Stefanopoulos on the same evening as they heard of this threat to the young Greeks.

At the time of writing, the blow has not yet fallen on the Lambrakides, but a severe blow has been dealt to the other great obstacle to creeping fascism—the trade union movement. This was accomplished by shameless police and judicial pressure at the Seventh Congress of the Athens Labour Centre (Trades Council) as well

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as open trickery by the officially appointed 'leadership'. Out of 1,510 delegates elected, only 800 were allowed to attend and only 460 of these could be induced to vote for Makris and the new right-wing Administrative Committee of the Athens Labour Centre, who represent only one-sixth of the organised workers of Athens.

The meeting place of the Congress was changed at the last moment from Athens to Piraeus after the Athens judicial authorities had publicly refused to become accomplices of the irregularities relating to the Congress. The Piraeus Judicial Representative had no such qualms and the Piraeus police threw a cordon right round the Congress Hall and prevented many lawfully elected delegates from entering it. The result of these faked elections has been that Makris and Theodorou have been able to secure a majority on the Administrative Committee of the Greek TUC. This is being hotly contested by the Centre Union General Secretary Galatis and the left. Prolonged legal battles are likely.

Today, anything may happen in Greece. The Stefanopoulos Government is extremely unstable. The ERE right-wing party, which supports it rather unwillingly, is split between old-fashioned Conservatives like its leader, Kanelopoulos, who are against dictatorship and the extreme fascist/royalist types who would welcome it.

The United Democratic Left (EDA) with its 22 MPs maintains its influence with the young people and the organised workers and joins with the 121 Centre Union MPs in demanding free elections as soon as possible.

FROM DIJON, FRANCE has come a letter which it was felt readers would find of interest. The Secretary of the Mouvement Contre l'Armement Atomique (CND) of the Côte d'Or District writes of their 'concern at the present situation in Vietnam' and their 'profound regrets at the support given to the Johnson Administration by Premier Harold Wilson', pointing out that 'on this subject of Vietnam even de Gaulle and Adenauer are more progressive!'. Their Committee, he says, does not cease denouncing the 'scandalous violation of the Geneva agreements by the USA' and he ends with best wishes to our magazine.

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NOW THE COMMON SCHOOL

Ken Forge

WE are in a situation where it is possible, provided the government shows tact and determination, to set the system of education proposed by the workers of London just 130 years ago: that of 'the common school where all children are educated together', and under which 'special privileges are not available to special types of children in special types of schools, for whatever reason'.

Interviewed by the *Sunday Citizen* in July last year, Mr. Crosland described the system under which one child out of five in this country went to a grammar school and the other four to secondary modern schools as unjust and wasteful. Moreover, since it is mainly the children of the lower-paid workers who are relegated to the secondary moderns, the system entrenches present class distinctions. What makes it even more necessary to achieve the common school within the lifetime of the present parliament is that this divide-and-rule system is not only wasteful and unjust: it is unbelievably cruel; it inflicts upon a great number of our children, often before they are seven years old, a shock of disillusion and discouragement which lowers their self-confidence and self-respect, with effects that are cumulative. Each school year the child falls a little further behind the more fortunate children in the 'A' classes.

Our chosen remedy is the comprehensive school, and the battle for this has to be fought on two fronts: in parliament for a new education act which clears up the mess left by the misleading talk about 'aptitudes and abilities' in the 1944 Act, sets out the true aims of our education policy and gives the Secretary the powers necessary to see that the local authorities put the policy into practice; and at constituency level, to see parents and other voters understand what the local authorities are up to and make sure that the intentions of the Secretary and the hopes of the people are not bogged down into what Sir Arthur Clegg has warned us might become 'an orgy of double talk and double think that could go on for years'.

At this time of writing, the latest news from the parliamentary front is that on August 4 the Secretary for Education and Science told the Commons that of the 162 education authorities in England and Wales, 15 already had approved comprehensive schemes covering the whole of their areas; 29 had at least four comprehensive schools, or 20 per cent of their children in such schools; 16 had been

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granted more time to prepare their schemes, and only three had refused to submit any scheme at all. Mr. Crosland expected that there would not be more than 10 'rebel' authorities at the most.

How is the Secretary to deal with these 'rebels' and get his policy put into effect throughout the country? The 1944 Act instructs him to secure the effective execution of the national policy for providing a comprehensive education sevice in every area, but this may not be enough; there are 53 voluntary aided grammar schools in the London area which are protected by law from being merged into such a scheme, and so long as 15 per cent of the London primary school output is being selected for grammar schools there can be no truly comprehensive schools in London. Again, legislation is needed to make clear what is meant by 'parents' choice'. The 10,000 Ealing parents objecting to local plans for comprehensive education have just lost their case; but they are considering an appeal, and the court admitted that the relevant section of the 1944 Act is 'badly worded and not very clear'. And, of course, there is still the question of the 'public' and 'independent' schools. Some church schools are voluntarily reorganising themselves on comprehensive lines, but here again further thought—and legislation—is clearly needed.

Some local authorities have already submitted schemes of the 'double talk and double think' variety which will in fact leave their schools almost where they are today. In Bromley parents will, nominally at least, be free to choose at 11+ between a school with a course ending at 16 and one with courses ending at 18—provided they are willing to keep the child at school to 18; and if they choose the former (to 16) then the child may transfer at 16 to the 18th year school. It all sounds so fair and reasonable until we remember that the authority must know very well that if all parents exercised their right to choose the school with the better staffing and equipment—the 18th year school—their bluff would be called because there just would not be places for four out of five of the applicants. In other words the authority is depending upon the poorer parents wanting their children to leave school as early as possible.

Parents and other voters consulted (as the Secretary says they should be) about the system to be adopted in their area will have to compare the attractions of the all-through 11 to 18 school, several varieties of the two-tier primary-middle-high school system, and the 11 to 16 school passing students on to a separate 6th form college. If they opt for the 11 to 18 school they may do well to suggest that the buildings allow for a degree of separate organisation for the

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upper and lower school, as there is reason to suspect that some break at 13+ is desirable. The 11 to 16 school plus the 6th form college is a more doubtful starter. To be without a 6th form and the balance and example it can provide, and without access to its staff and equipment, is a severe handicap to the 4th and 5th forms which are themselves ready for living and working in a 'college' rather than a 'school' atmosphere; and students are more likely to *stay on* into a sixth year than to *transfer into* one. Moreover a 6th form college once established is likely to become a place of prestige and privilege and might be difficult to disestablish should this ever become desirable.

The schemes to be submitted to the Secretary are to be in two parts—interim plans for the next three years and long-term objectives. In putting forward schemes it is important to keep in mind that no extra funds for implementing them are likely to be available for some time. The choice may be between accepting the best that can be done given the existing staff, buildings and equipment and giving a reactionary authority an excuse to do nothing for lack of funds.

To have our children all going to comprehensive schools will certainly be a great step forward: but if, once they are inside they find themselves split up into streams—backward, secondary modern, and grammar, or by whatever fancy names they may be called—we shall still be less than half way to the common school where all children are educated together. This streaming inside the comprehensives leaves untouched far too much of the injustice, wastefulness, and class discrimination of the present system; and it is not just an administrative question—of allocating each year's intake to classes by lot instead of by so-called ability—but a question of devising a curriculum, providing remedial facilities, and adapting our teaching methods and organisation so that children from widely differing social backgrounds can understand one another, learn from one another and be integrated into a harmonious community (or series of communities) whose members live and work together as comrades.

Finally, if the schools are to be truly comprehensive the single-sex school must go as soon as the building programme allows; and we must watch the catchment area from which each school gathers its intake, to make sure that in every school there is a fair cross section of the community so that there is never, in any area, one school for the rich and one for the poor.

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PAISLEYISM AND 'PROGRESS'

C. Desmond Greaves

THE eruption of the Rev. Ian Paisley into United Kingdom politics has directed much needed attention to the deplorable state of affairs in 'Northern Ireland'.* It has revealed to a public fed on editions from which Irish news is usually excluded, the depth of Unionist reaction, and the lengths to which its extremists are prepared to go. It has also provided the Unionist Premier Captain O'Neill with the opportunity to represent himself as a Liberal struggling manfully against backwoodsmen bent on wrecking his praiseworthy reforms.

Thus at his press conference on August 5 which was so scantily reported by the British press, he declared that had he followed the tradition of his predecessor instead of his own 'progressive policies' the world would have heard little of Mr. Paisley. Journalists have a stronger desire for information than their editors for imparting it to the public. Captain O'Neill was encouraged to explain his 'progressive policies' in relation to the most publicised grievances of 'Northern Ireland' life. The *Irish Press* was disappointed. 'The most probing questions, on Ian Paisley, electoral and local Government reforms and sectarianism were played down.' As for the constitutional position the Premier observed that he had always found it difficult to explain it to Englishmen. What was clear was that whatever these 'progressive policies' were, the reforms have yet to see the light of day. They do not exist. And Paisleyism is a product of 'Northern Ireland' society not as it was, but as it is.

The stock-in-trade of the self-styled 'moderator' of a religious denomination which he founded himself is anti-catholicism pure and simple. But in 'Northern Ireland' the basic social fact which permeates every aspect of public life is the enforced inferiority of Catholics. This, and this alone, explains why people vote according to their religion, and why Labour makes such slow progress. Paisleyism could grow in no other soil. And it is soil which Captain O'Neill has done nothing to fumigate.

How did such a bizarre situation come about? At the turn of the sixteenth century the English Crown granted vast tracts of Ulster to adventurers prepared to take the risk of dispossessing

* Irish Nationalists do not accept this designation since it denies the reality of Irish unity.

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the Gaelic-speaking natives. Since these consisted of a Catholic peasantry the means adopted was to bring in Protestant settlers, and to carry through penal enactments against Catholics so as to prevent their regaining their farms. Among the principal beneficiaries were the Chichester family who gained 60,000 acres at one blow. Perhaps the greatest losses were sustained by the O'Neills, the most important family in central Ulster, whose connection with the area went back well over a millenium.

Only in the immediate vicinity of what is now the city of Belfast were the original inhabitants completely replaced. Elsewhere as the lush pasturages of the plains were peopled by settlers, the native Irish broke fresh ground in the barren hills, carving farms out of whin and heather, and here they were tolerated as payers of rent and a reserve labour force. To this day their numerous small farms survive on the high ground, in marked contrast to the Protestants' large holdings in the valleys.

The sons of big Protestant farmers form the backbone of the armed special constabulary in country districts. They and their sisters have first choice of employment in the thinly industrialised western areas, where many factories refuse to employ Catholics, or at most employ a handful. To add insult to injury some enterprising member of the Chichester family paid a back-handed compliment to autochthony by taking the name O'Neill, whence, it is said, in the fullness of time, came the Prime Minister.

Needless to say, such a system of social segregation could not have survived three and a half centuries without its own form of apartheid policy. The festive banners and furtive graffiti which bid one 'Remember 1690' recall that in that year William of Orange confirmed the apartheid with a large force of continental mercenaries. The Orange Order, whose close connection with the Unionist Party Captain O'Neill admitted to the journalists but could not precisely define, was founded in 1795. Among other amiable memories it does annual obeisance to the 'Battle of the Diamond', a skirmish which formed part of the landlords' policy of setting Catholic and Protestant tenants at each other's throats once more, after they had shown signs of uniting under the influence of Wolfe Tone, and the French revolution.

At Carlisle Circus, Belfast, stands a monument of more recent date, the statue of 'Roaring Hanna', the cleric who introduced religious sectarianism into Belfast in the 1850s. This city was traditionally the cradle of Republicanism in Ireland, and though almost

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wholly Protestant, was the usual refuge for Catholics driven from their homes in the country. The development of industry had drawn in a rural population to which religious feuds were still alive. The great shipyards were being established. Hanna told the Protestant workers that their 'god-given rights' were being trampled underfoot by the rapacity of a 'Romish mob', and no wonder the well breeched employing class of Belfast subscribed handsomely to the erection of his statue.

To this day there are factories in Belfast which refuse to employ Catholics. To a great extent the Protestant workers predominate in the skilled trades, the Catholic in the less skilled or underprivileged. The division universal in 'Northern Ireland' has at times even penetrated the trade union movement where in certain rare cases branches of one society have been (unofficially) Catholic or Protestant as the case may be.

Every time the Irish people in general, or the Belfast workers in particular, reached forward for some decisive advance, reaction played the same card. The riots which marked the introduction of all three Home Rule bills were initiated by the cry 'Home Rule is Rome Rule'. In 1907 and 1919 sectarian divisions were overcome in the heat of hard-fought industrial struggles. In 1932 the unemployment movement transcended them once more. But in every case where this happened the policy of the employers and the government was to sow religious dissension and drive the workers as nearly as possible back to their starting point. Such events inevitably found their echo in Glasgow and Liverpool to which large numbers of Ulstermen had emigrated.

The period since 1938 has seen a steady advance of working-class and democratic unity on a number of fronts. Not for decades has the Irish scene been so promising. The ageing attendance at Orange lodge meetings has shown that sectarianism is losing its attraction for the younger generation. With the Belfast Trades Council and the Short and Harland Aircraft workers in the lead, unity in the fight against closures and redundancies spread into the rural areas where the majority of the people were Catholic. This was a fight primarily against the imperial Government and profoundly educated many Protestant workers on the reality of the 'constitution'. London collects 90 per cent of 'Northern Ireland' taxation, and doles it out for approved projects.

The solidarity struggle for the release of the 173 Republicans interned without charge or trial was begun by the movement of the

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Irish in Britain, and rapidly attracted the support of several million British trade unionists and about seventy Labour MPs. In this situation where British democracy was taking an increasing interest in a statelet where twenty out of the thirty provisions of the universal declaration of human rights were abrogated, a lively civil rights movement established itself in 'Northern Ireland'. I remember a conference called by the Belfast Trades Council in which old Catholic trade unionists *for the first time in their lives*, with glistening eyes, told their Protestant fellow-workers of the disabilities under which Catholics laboured. The Campaign for Social Justice succeeded in extracting from Mr. Wilson a promise to 'do all in his power' to restore democracy north of the border.

These developments naturally reflected themselves in a decline in Unionist votes, not a regular or invariable decline, but one which brought forth for the first time in forty years the possibility of an alternative Government. Unity of all anti-unionist forces had long been advocated by the Communist Party. The aim was taken up by others. The process was assisted by the movement towards ecumenism and the pronouncements of Pope John. A situation was developing in which Unionism required the 'progressive policies' of Sir Terence O'Neill rather than the 'not an inch' of Lord Brookeborough *in order to survive*. The change was further aided by Britain's increasing orientation towards the EEC in relation to which her Irish policy became 'Integration within integration', a course necessitating a rapprochement with the other part of Ireland, the Republic.

To this readjustment Mr. Paisley, now a 'civil prisoner' entitled to wear his own clothes and eat his own food, was an embarrassment. The Unionists locked him up, not because they disapproved of his aim, but because his methods were outdated. Had Mr. Wilson carried out his promise of social justice, there would have been no Paisley. But what can be expected of a politician way-laid by Swiss bankers and ordered to part with his programme or his life?

Central Belfast is full of busy building activity. Chain stores and supermarkets rear their ugly frontages against urbane Victoriana of the days of local enterprise. In the meaner streets one small shopkeeper after another puts up his shutters. The steamroller of monopoly capitalism crushes all before it. A revealing lament in a Paisleyite speech was that even devout Protestants would neglect the shop at the street corner and go into a city supermarket which employed Catholics. Apart from the Protestant lumpen-proletariat, the kindling for every riot over a century, Paisley seems to have

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expressed the discontent of middle-class sections oppressed by British monopoly capitalism and turned it against the Catholics and the democrats, the very sections with whom it is essential to have unity if the middle class is to survive. Captain O'Neill can thank Paisley for that while he utters his public reprobations.

Paisleyism does indeed illustrate the dilemma of Unionism in these latter days. The centuries-old Protestant ascendancy is beginning to shake. New social forces are demanding a new order. But Unionism is capable of taking the simplest steps towards that order. Its leaders favour O'Neill; much of the rank and file favours Paisley. Divisions are not easily overcome.

The British labour movement should give every possible support and encouragement to the growth within 'Northern Ireland' of the unity of the anti-Unionist forces. These range from the Communists and Republicans on the left through the two Labour Parties to the Nationalists on the right. In Britain the now widespread demand for an impartial inquiry into the operation of the Westminster Act under which 'Northern Ireland' is governed, should be pressed vigorously as a means of re-opening the whole question of the future of this area. The final solution can only be achieved after the withdrawal of all British objections to the re-unification of Ireland.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

The trade unions cannot escape the struggle, unless the workers are all to submit to starvation conditions, which in its turn will not solve the economic crisis, but will only intensify it . . . The attack this time goes beyond the attack of 1921-2 in that it is both economic and political in character. The price levels in the export industries still make indispensable from the point of view of capitalism a further wages and hours attack . . . but this continued attack in the basic industries where trade unionism is traditionally strong necessarily transforms the trade unions from the old line of co-operation to the new path of class struggle. Red Friday and Scarborough were the signals of this transformation to the bourgeoisie, who thereon concentrated all efforts upon inflicting the defeat of May 12. Once, however, that defeat has been inflicted with the aid of the old-time leadership, they can no longer risk a resurrection of trade unionism with a clearer policy and a fighting leadership, ready to act on the lessons of May 12. Therefore the moment for the shackling of trade unionism is now . . . The machinery of the trade unions must be brought under the control of the State and all spontaneous unofficial action of the workers checked. Hence the new legislation to control strike ballots, make strike funds seizable, prohibit unofficial strikes, stop mass picketing, etc. The trade unions are being shackled, prior to the victory of a genuine class-struggle Left within them.

(From 'The Trades Union Congress', Notes of the Month, *Labour Monthly*, September, 1926.)

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WILL YIDDISH CULTURE SURVIVE?

Judah Waten

('Yiddish literature is at a very low ebb in the USA and is virtually extinct in Britain, but in the Soviet Union there is still considerable creative activity in the Yiddish language'. This is the theme of a two-part article written by Australian Jewish novelist, Judah Waten, of which we published the first part in the August issue. Entitled Yiddish Culture in West and East, *it traced the history of the Yiddish language and culture and showed its decline in the West. In this second part printed below he shows the development of Yiddish culture in Poland and the Soviet Union.—Ed., LM.)*

THE Polish state established after the first world war had a Jewish population of over 3,000,000, most of whom lived in virtual ghettoes in Warsaw and other cities and towns, crowded into tenements, usually large blocks with 3 or 4 courtyards, dozens of miserable small workshops, primitive factories and flats and rooms equally overcrowded. For the majority of the Jews, Poland was a land of poverty and oppression, one third living at a low subsistence level. Although the Jews were natives of Poland in the same sense as the Polish people, having lived there for 10 centuries, the semi-fascist governments conducted a discriminatory policy against the Jews and after Hitler's coming to power in Germany intensified anti-semitic measures. As the American critics Irving Howe and E. Greenberg said in their introduction to *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, the Polish Jews lived 'always on the edge of dispossession and terror'.

Nevertheless there was a lively Yiddish literature in Poland and the fame of a number of Polish Yiddish writers like Sholem Asch, I. J. Singer and I. M. Weissenberg spread to many countries. Yet a high percentage of Yiddish writers found it necessary to emigrate to the USA, France, Argentine, Canada and Australia, as it was difficult for the Yiddish writer to make a living in Poland.

There was little association between the Jewish and Polish peoples, and the Yiddish and Polish literatures existed in separate compartments. The Polish authorities were quite contemptuous of Yiddish literature, regarding it as something vulgar and inferior and many leading Polish writers were barely aware of the existence of the Yiddish literature in their midst. But just as in Czarist Russia, significant numbers of Jews were educated in Polish schools and from

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Rosa Luxemburg onwards many Jews played prominent parts in the Polish Socialist and Communist movements as distinct from the Jewish labour movement. In the inter-war period Julian Tuvim and Anton Slonimsky, both Jews, were the most eminent poets writing in Polish.

The nazi occupation of Poland resulted in the almost total extinction of the Jewish community and the loss of the Yiddish cultural tradition. Out of 3,250,000 Jews living in Poland at the beginning of the war, 2,900,000 (85 per cent) were killed by the nazis and every cultural institution destroyed. (Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry re European Jewry and Palestine, Lausanne 1946.)

Soviet Jewry also sustained great losses at the hands of the nazis. The same Anglo-American committee of Enquiry estimated that in the nazi-occupied parts of the Soviet Union a total of 1,500,000 (71.4 per cent) were killed. Many Jews were saved however. As Professor Hyman Levy says in his book *Jews and the National Question*:

> It will always stand to the credit of the Soviet military authorities that they took immediate and timely steps to evacuate Jews from these danger spots to regions far distant from the actual fighting front.

Most of the Jews killed by the nazis lived in towns and cities of the Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania and Latvia, in compact Jewish communities that still used Yiddish as its principal language, although shortly before the war Russian was seriously challenging Yiddish, due to the Jewish parents sending their children to Russian schools in preference to the Yiddish ones, with the result that the latter closed down.

Fortunately the revolution which had liberated the millions of Jews from the enforced ghettoes enabled them to settle in Moscow and other cities that remained out of reach of the nazis, otherwise Soviet Jewry would have met the fate of Polish Jewry. Even some of the Jews in Moscow and towns close to the front lines were evacuated into the deep hinterland.

Thus the post-war period saw a new distribution of Jews throughout the Soviet Union. The Jewish communities had ceased to be as cohesive as before the war. Jews were far more scattered all over the Soviet Union and there were new concentrations of young, principally non-Yiddish speaking Jews in Kiev and Odessa replacing the Yiddish communities destroyed by the nazis. The Jewish populations of Moscow and Leningrad increased greatly as Russian-speaking Jewish students and professionals thronged to these cities.

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As the Yiddish-speaking section was now so much smaller in Odessa and Kiev, once the backbone of the Yiddish cultural world, there was a general lessening of Yiddish cultural activity, apart from the repressive actions against Yiddish writers and Yiddish cultural institutions in 1948 which temporarily brought all Yiddish cultural activity to a stop.

Excluding this dark period that lasted from 1948 until 1953 the history of the Soviet Union has been one of Party and State support for Yiddish literature and culture, from 1917 until 1948, and then resuming again after Stalin's death in 1953. This support for Yiddish culture went hand in hand with efforts to effect a complete social and economic transformation of the Jews as the bulk of the Jewish population were of the lower middle class without experience in industry or agriculture. Within three decades the character of Soviet Jewry was substantially altered; great numbers graduated from the general schools and the universities from which they had been excluded in Czarist Russia and they were now steeped in the Russian language and culture. If in 1917 Jewish scientists could be numbered at less than a hundred, at the beginning of the Hitler attack in 1941 their number ran into hundreds of thousands. After the war, the age of electronics, of nuclear energy, rocketry and space travel, and of the automated factory—the second industrial revolution—was well under way. This was the unfolding Soviet world into which the bulk of the Soviet Jewish trained scientists had entered, and to the construction of which they made a contribution far greater, as official figures record, than their proportional size among the general population.

The post-revolutionary era also saw the appearance for the first time of a large group of Jews in the Russian literature, as Isaac Babel (considered by critics everywhere to be one of the finest 20th century European writers), Pasternak, Mandelstamm, Svetlov, Slutzky, Marshak, Ehrenburg and Kasakevich.

This was in part an expression of the waning Jewish separatism as was in another field the failure of the experiment of Biro-Bidjan. This had offered an opportunity for those Jews who wished to establish a territorial nation-state under socialist conditions. The experiment served to prove that the overwhelming majority of Soviet Jews had no wish to go back to Jewish separatism.

In his *Pictorial History of the Jewish People* (Crown Publishers, New York) Nathan Ausubel speaks of the extensive government-

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supported cultural activities in the early '30s when Yiddish cultural activities were at their zenith and goes on to say:

> In a late census, before the nazi attack on Russia, more Jews claimed Russian than Yiddish as their mother tongue.

Yet despite this dramatic development, impressive achievements were recorded in Yiddish literature between 1917 and the war. Some of the greatest writers in the history of Yiddish literature, after the classical trio, were then publishing in the Soviet Union. They included the novelists David Bergelson, world famous for his monumental novel *By the Dnieper*, and Der Nistor whose novel *The Family Mashber* is one of the most outstanding novels in Yiddish literature, an epic story of the disintegration of an old Jewish community in Russia. The poets included Peretz Markish, David Hofstein and Leib Kvitko all of whom are now also considered Soviet classics.

In the '30s a number of well-known Yiddish writers including the poet Isi Kharik fell victim to the purges. Most of them have been posthumously rehabilitated and republished since the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956. These historical miscarriages of justice cannot however be considered a form of anti-Jewish persecution, as many non-Jewish writers as well as political and cultural personalities fell during that period on similar charges.

Right through the '30s Yiddish writers continued to produce impressive works and many of them took part in the war at the front and in the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee. Perhaps the most remarkable Yiddish work to appear at that time was Peretz Markish's epic poem *The War* which gives moving expression to the sufferings of the Jews and mankind generally in the life and death struggle against the nazis.

It was in 1948 as previously noted, that all Jewish cultural institutions and Yiddish publications were closed down and a group of leading Yiddish writers and cultural workers arrested. As in the '30s these arrests were part of a drive against alleged opposition groups, non-Jewish as well as Jewish, and prominent leaders of the Communist Party were among those imprisoned and executed.

The arrested Jewish group included Peretz Markish, David Bergelson and Leib Kvitko, devoted supporters of the Soviet system as well as great writers. After years of imprisonment they were secretly tried and executed in 1952. Less than a year later, shortly after Stalin's death, it became known that the whole affair was a travesty of justice and that a monstrous crime had been committed. The poet Samuel Halkin was the only one among that group of

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eminent names who miraculously survived the wave of insane destruction.

Only a literature with deep roots in the life and language of a people could have survived this terrible blow, the loss of some of its greatest representatives. After 1953 there were still enough Yiddish literary forces to begin the slow, difficult task of reconstruction.

The Ukranian-Jewish poet Abram Gontar expressed the determination of his fellow Yiddish writers to continue, in a poem published in the Soviet Yiddish monthly publication, *Soviet Homeland*:

> I won't put out the flickering light.
> As long as its flame will last, I'll let it burn.
> Should someone lose his way in the night,
> It will guide him on the road of safe return.
> For I believe, as surely as I know,
> He will remember it in years to come —
> The unexpected light of long ago,
> That blazed forth from the window of my home.

The 160-page *Soviet Homeland* has over 20,000 readers which places it among the biggest Yiddish literary publications in the world, probably the biggest. It has not only been republishing the older Soviet-Yiddish writers but also new writers who have appeared in the last decade. It is a singular fact that a number of talented Yiddish writers have begun to publish in recent years, supporting the view that Yiddish literature in the Soviet Union has not become exhausted and that the 490,000 Soviet Jews who still consider Yiddish as their mother tongue, form a reliable basis for the continued development of Yiddish literature. In the 1964 Soviet-Yiddish poetry anthology there were at least 7 new Jewish poets of distinction. There were new prose writers among the 50 living Soviet-Yiddish writers included in the prose anthology published in 1965. This anthology was edited by the editor of *Soviet Homeland*, Aaron Vergelis, himself a comparative newcomer to Yiddish literature. Born in 1918 in the Ukraine he was educated in Biro-Bidjan where his parents took him when he was 10. What is not well known about him is that he is an exceptionally gifted poet and his poem to the memory of Peretz Markish is one of the most striking to have come out of the Soviet Union since 1953. It begins:

> He lives, he lives
> I keep for him his bread.
> And now and then my pain grows
> Hard and harder
> How do I know that he's already dead?
> Did they tell you then that it was murder?

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A Soviet-Yiddish poet who has recently attracted international as well as Soviet attention is the Vilna poet, Hirsh Osherovich, described by Joel Cang, the former foreign editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, as having 'great gifts which place him among the finest Yiddish poets in both parts of the world today, East and West'. Equally the Soviet-Yiddish novelists Nathan Lurya, Eli Shechtman and Yechiel Falikman have made big impressions with their new novels and are making a substantial contribution both to Yiddish and Soviet literatures. Many Yiddish critics throughout the world regard Lurya as the outstanding Yiddish novelist of the present time, and his novel *Call From the Steppes* also won praise in the Russian and Ukrainian press. A gifted new prose writer who should be mentioned is Alexander Gubnitzky, a lorry driver and not a professional writer. Skilfully he has described the life of Jews in the remoter parts of Russia, and their role in the development and construction of the new industrial centres.

Is there a future for Yiddish and Yiddish literature? As far as the British speaking countries are concerned the outlook is indeed bleak. As David Daiches, Professor of English at the University of Sussex and an authority on Hebrew and Yiddish literatures, said in the *Jewish Quarterly* (summer 1955):

> As for Yiddish, it represents a much smaller part, both historically and geographically, of the Jewish tradition, and though it has an appealing colour and warmth and is in itself an admirably literary language, it is surely thoroughly unrealistic to look forward to a flourishing, creative Yiddish literature in England or America . . .

This is just as true for Australia and Canada where there are a few Yiddish writers, but for the majority of the Jews in both countries English is their native tongue. Literature can finally only be made out of the speech of a people.

The State of Israel offers no hope to Yiddish. In their introduction to *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, Irving Howe and E. Greenberg say:

> For the State of Israel, through a variety of semi-official devices, has discouraged the use of Yiddish among its citizens. The language is looked down upon for the very reason that Yiddish writers cling to it so fiercely, and with so desperate an affection: because it is the language of the Jewish dispersion, stained by exile, defeat and martyrdom.

It is not quite so true now of Israel as when those words were written back in the 'fifties. Nevertheless Yiddish is not encouraged, only Hebrew which is the official language. It is repeatedly stated

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by Israel's leaders that Israel's cultural consciousness is Hebrew, and draws its historical nourishment from the Bible and the Talmud.

It would seem then that only in the Soviet Union has Yiddish literature a better chance of survival than anywhere else. This is not only because it has deeper roots in the Soviet Union but also because Soviet Yiddish literature has adapted itself to the new life and does not draw on a Ghetto sensibility which is still the case with Yiddish writers elsewhere. Another factor is the possibility of increased official support which has been suggested in a recent Tass statement. And not least, the re-publication in very large editions of Yiddish poetry and Yiddish novels in Russian, Ukrainian and other languages of the Soviet Union, is a tremendous encouragement to Yiddish writers to continue writing in their native language, for they can express one area of the Soviet-Jewish spirit and at the same time address the vast Soviet world. This point was made to me by the Yiddish novelist Yechiel Falikman on the Kiev railway station as I left for Odessa and he for Moscow with the manuscript of his new novel in his suitcase.

BOOK REVIEWS

Nigerian Government and Politics
John P. Mackintosh
Allen & Unwin Ltd., 652 pp., 80s.

DURING THE PAST decade many books have purported to present a study of political developments in Nigeria. Coming so soon after the January military coup this one is of unusual interest. The author was senior lecturer for two and a half years at the University of Ibadan from 1961 to 1963, and returned in January 1965 to make a tour of Nigeria, which was financed by the Leverhulme Trust. He is now Professor of 'Political Theory and Institutions' at the University of Strathclyde.

First-hand experience can certainly be useful, but in this case it does not seem to have paid political dividends—except perhaps to the sponsors. In fact, the most interesting and valuble chapters (comprising 40 per cent of over 600 pages) are by other writers.

The Preface assures us of the author's 'strongly anti-colonialist views', but makes clear 'this never led me to try and condemn the British administration'. It contests the view of 'young nationalists' that federalism was imposed by the British to keep Nigeria 'weak and divided'. But the chapter by B. J. Dudley makes clear that the feudal emirs of the north (bigger than all other regions put together) were the main political (and reactionary) force in Nigeria.

In the opening chapter the 1960 Constitution (imposed by Britain as a condition of independence) is presented as one which 'is likely to last, not because of its merits, though they are considerable, but because the North is in power'. And in the last chapter it is asserted that: 'Nigeria, at the time of writing (1965) is one of the most diverse, vigorous and free communi-

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ties in Africa'. It is rather ironic that this is followed by a postscript on the January 1966 military coup which put an end to the Constitution and all former regional divisions! This is described as 'an affirmation of Nigerian feelings and interests as against regionalism and tribalism', and that: 'As regards the North, it is a tremendous blow to the old social order'.

The January military coup was launched by young radical military officers. They were prevented from achieving their aims by the intervention of Major-General Ironsi. They were arrested, and still remain in detention. On August 1, Ironsi himself was deposed and killed. Colonel Gowown (a northerner) then took over. This has enabled the northern feudal emirs and reactionary southern chiefs to make a come-back, and it now seems that the old reactionary federal system is in the process of being rebuilt. However, the military coups have certainly not solved Nigeria's problems. But no-one can doubt they were the outcome of the mass revolt against a repressive regime dominated by the northern feudal emirs and the wealthy capitalist elements in the southern regions. It seems obvious the author was tempted to accept the views of corrupt Nigerian politicians who had vested interests in the old regime and a constitution which gave the forces of reaction a dominant position.

All the same, the book is worth while primarily for the chapters by other writers. Professor Ken Post has a useful one on the NCNC and J. M. Dent a most absorbing one on the Tiv people and the United Middle Belt Congress in the north, which has waged such a heroic mass struggle against the domination of the feudal emirs.

IDRIS COX.

The Conjurors

Judith Todd

Lawrence & Wishart, 96 pp., 7s. 6d.

SOMETHING LIKE A MILLION people in Great Britain, from whose ranks come those who really control our whole economy, grow ever richer and consume ever more, year by year. So strong is their position that the 'redistribution of wealth' which taxation is supposed to achieve has not even begun, and our upper bourgeoisie is probably stronger today than at any time since the first world war.

Miss Todd describes the machinery of 'tax-avoidance' by which these particularly expensive and anti-social people preserve much of their wealth. Perhaps a little unkindly to a section of the entertainment industry, she calls these vultures 'conjurors'. But the word is apt enough to describe their ways of creating loopholes in the tax-legislation, and of keeping always a few steps ahead of the legislature, opening new loopholes as fast as the earlier ones are stopped by successive Finance Acts, and finding encouragement from the decisions of judges who themselves are drawn from tax-avoiding classes. Nor do Labour governments—existing by the tolerance of our rulers—create any serious obstacle to the conjurors.

How these new heroes, 'fiddling' while the economy smoulders, must laugh at Labour's 'incomes policy'. They create their own policy, and the only incomes they seek to limit are those of the producers whose lives they cramp by their own mismanagement of industry.

Miss Todd's book is as full of lessons in politics and economics as it is of wit. It must not be the last of her demonstrations that capitalism can no longer work!

D. N. PRITT.

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FURIOUS ACTION

IT is no exaggeration to say that the whole future of the people of this country can depend on the determination and unity of the left forces in Britain—the issue is the basic one of peace or war, now inextricably linked with the economic battle.

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Helen Falber.

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